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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN: 2008 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

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1. (SBU) Following is the text of Dushanbe's 2008 Country Report on Terrorism:

As the poorest of the former Soviet countries, the Tajik government's main impediment to counterterrorism remained its lack of resources. The government, particularly the Border Guards, lacked appropriate technical equipment, personnel, and training to effectively interdict illegal border crossings and to detect and analyze hazardous substances. Individual border guards and other law enforcement personnel were not motivated to interdict smugglers or traffickers due to systematic corruption, low income, conscripted service, and lack of support from senior Tajik government officials. As a result, Tajikistan served as a transit country for extremists and terrorists traveling to and from Afghanistan and Pakistan. To address this issue, the United States and other donors assisted the government of Tajikistan to secure its 1400 kilometer porous border with Afghanistan. Assistance included the rehabilitation and equipping of three border outposts on the border with Afghanistan, the creation of an Analytical Center to process counternarcotics information, and a \$5 million U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) radio program to improve Border Guard communications capability. DOD held four Counter Narcoterrorism Training (CNT) (formerly Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET)) events with Tajik security forces to improve their capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations.

The U.S. Embassy administered training on chemical weapons response and detection of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The Defense Institute for Legal Studies conducted a Response to Terrorism course in Dushanbe that representatives from several ministries attended. Tajikistan also participated in exercise Regional Cooperation 08, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense and hosted by Kyrgyzstan. This exercise focused on dealing with terrorism, and strengthened cooperation between the Central Asian countries. The Counter Narcotics program continued to assist Tajikistan with facilities construction, communications equipment, and training, totaling nearly \$10 million. This effort helped stabilize the border regions and combat terrorism by stopping potential terrorists attempting to cross the Tajik border, and enabling Tajikistan to better control its borders. Tajikistan endorsed the joint U.S.-Russia co-chaired Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. The Tajik government also participated in regional security alliances, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Since September 11, 2001, the Government of Tajikistan has allowed its airspace to be used for counterterrorist actions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Tajikistan prohibited extremist-oriented activities and closely monitored groups it listed as terrorist organizations, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizbut-Tahrir (HT). The Government of Tajikistan believed that HT, in particular, was active in the northern part of the country. U.S. government analysts believed that supporters of terrorist groups such as al-QaQida, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) and the IMU were active in the region this year.

The Government of Tajikistan did not provide safe haven for terrorists or terrorist organizations. However, the country's poor economic climate and government policies to restrict Islamic religious practice provided conditions that religious extremists could exploit. Under the guise of fighting extremism, the government of Tajikistan has taken increased measures against opposition parties in the country, particularly the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), the only legal Islamic political party in Central Asia. Tajik law enforcement and security officials viewed the Salafi religious movement as a serious threat to national security, comparing Salafists to the IMU. Security organizations have diverted significant resources used to fight terrorism in the country to investigate Salafists.

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